

**WE CLAIM:**

1. A method of facilitating access to multimedia content distributed over a computer network, said method comprising the steps of:
  - 5 at a server within said network, monitoring location recording activities of subscribers of said server to form a ranked list of multimedia locations recorded by said subscribers;  
receiving search criteria relating to said multimedia content entered by a subscriber; and
  - 10 applying said search criteria to said ranked list to provide said subscriber with network identifiers for said multimedia content corresponding to those said recorded locations best satisfying said search criteria.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein said search criteria is applied to an  
15 entirety of said ranked list.
3. A method according to claim 1 wherein said search criteria is applied to a subset of the network identifiers comprising said ranked list.
- 20 4. A method according to claim 3 wherein said search set comprises a first predetermined number of highest ranked network identifiers from said list.
5. A method according to claim 4 further comprising the steps of randomly identifying from lower ranked ones of said network identifiers of said list a second  
25 predetermined number of said network identifiers, and substituting said second number of network identifiers into said search set, said second number being less than said first number.
6. A method according to claim 5 wherein said second number of network  
30 identifiers are randomly substituted into said search set.

7. A method according to claim 5 or 6 wherein said random selection of said lower ranked network identifiers is influenced by a subscriber selected parameter.

8. A method according to claim 7 wherein said parameter determines said second number of said network identifiers.

9. A method according to claim 8 wherein said random selection comprises, for each of said second number, selecting a rank position from said list and selecting a lower ranked one of said network identifiers to be substituted into said search set.

10. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said network identifier identifies an item of metadata, wherein said metadata represents one of a description of said item of multimedia content or a description of a collection of multimedia content.

11. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said network identifiers represent descriptions of collections of multimedia content, in which individual said descriptions of said content are accessible via branch network identifiers depending from other said network identifiers.

12. A method according to claim 11 wherein said network identifiers are selected from the group consisting of a URI for an XML description, and a URI for a metadata server root.

13. A method according to any one of the preceding claims further comprising, at said server, examining a corresponding ranked list at another server within said network and modifying said ranked list with locations obtained from said corresponding ranked list.

14. A method according to claim 1 wherein said search criteria is generated at a browser coupled to said server.

15. A method of forming a searchable list of computer network locations, said method comprising the steps of:

monitoring, at a server to a plurality of network subscribers, bookmarking activities of said subscribers with respect to certain ones of said network locations;

5 forming a list of network identifiers bookmarked by individual ones of said subscribers; and

ordering said network identifiers in said list according to a frequency of bookmarking by said subscribers.

10 16. A method according to claim 15 further comprising:

monitoring accesses by individual ones of said subscribers to said network identifiers within said list to modify said frequency; and

re-ordering said list according to said modified frequency.

15 17. A method of facilitating access to multimedia content distributed over a computer network, said method comprising, at a server within said network, the steps of:

interfacing an application by which at least one subscribing user thereof is enabled to access said multimedia content, each item of said multimedia content being identified by a network identifier;

20 monitoring individual said subscribing users' intent to use or store items of said multimedia content; and

in response to said monitoring, forming a ranked list of network identifiers relating to said items for use in facilitating access to said multimedia content for a predetermined set of said subscribing users, wherein an ordering of said list is determined by a frequency that the corresponding said network identifier is referenced with intent to use or store by said subscribing users.

18. A method according to claim 17 wherein said predetermined set of said subscribing user comprises all said subscribing users.

19. A method according to claim 17 wherein said network identifier comprises a uniform resource identifier.

20. A method according to claim 17 wherein said network identifier comprises a uniform resource location.

5 21. A method according to claim 17 wherein each said item is identified directly by said network identifier.

22. A method according to claim 17 wherein each said item is referenced indirectly by said network identifier.

10

23. A method according to claim 17 comprising the further steps of:  
receiving a search request from one said application;  
identifying search criteria from said search request;  
applying said search criteria to metadata associated with network identifiers  
15 forming at least part of said ranked list; and  
transmitting search results to said application according to a correspondence of said results to the ranking of said list.

20

24. A method according to claim 23 wherein said applying and transmitting comprise at least one of:

- (1) applying said search criteria to said network identifiers in said list and transmitting said search results according to said ranking;
- (2) selecting a plurality of highest ranked locations of said list and applying said search criteria to said plurality; and
- 25 (3) randomly mutating the ranked locations with locations lower in the rank list and applying the search criteria to the mutated locations.

25. A method according to claim 17 wherein said application is provided to a user terminal by said server to thereby provide said interface.

30

26. A computer readable medium, having a program recorded thereon, where the program is configured to make a computer execute a procedure to facilitate access to multimedia content distributed over a computer network, said program comprising:

code for monitoring location recording activities of subscribers of said server to form a ranked list of multimedia locations recorded by said subscribers;

code for receiving search criteria relating to said multimedia content entered by a subscriber; and

code for applying said search criteria to said ranked list to provide said subscriber with network identifiers for said multimedia content corresponding to those said recorded locations best satisfying said search criteria.

27. A computer readable medium according to claim 26 wherein said search criteria is applied to an entirety of said ranked list.

28. A computer readable medium according to claim 26 wherein said search criteria is applied to a subset of the network identifiers comprising said ranked list.

29. A computer readable medium according to claim 28 wherein said search set comprises a first predetermined number of highest ranked network identifiers from said list.

30. A computer readable medium according to claim 29 further comprising code for randomly identifying from lower ranked ones of said network identifiers of said list a second predetermined number of said network identifiers, and substituting said second number of network identifiers into said search set, said second number being less than said first number.

31. A computer readable medium according to claim 30 wherein said second number of network identifiers are randomly substituted into said search set.

32. A computer readable medium according to claim 30 or 31 wherein said random selection of said lower ranked network identifiers is influenced by a subscriber selected parameter that determines said second number of said network identifiers.

33. A computer readable medium according to claim 32 wherein said code for said random selection comprises, for each of said second number, code for selecting a rank position from said list and selecting a lower ranked one of said network identifiers to be substituted into said search set.

34. A computer readable medium according to claim 26 wherein said network identifier identifies an item of metadata, wherein said metadata represents one of a description of said item of multimedia content or a description of a collection of multimedia content and said network identifiers represent descriptions of collections of multimedia content, in which individual said descriptions of said content are accessible via branch network identifiers depending from other said network identifiers.

35. A computer readable medium according to claim 34 wherein said network identifiers are selected from the group consisting of a URI for an XML description, and a URI for a metadata server root.

36. A computer readable medium according to claim 26 further comprising, code for examining a corresponding ranked list at another server within said network and modifying said ranked list with locations obtained from said corresponding ranked list.

37. A computer readable medium, having a program recorded thereon, where the program is configured to make a computer execute a procedure to form a searchable list of computer network locations, said program comprising:

code for monitoring, at a server to a plurality of network subscribers, bookmarking activities of said subscribers with respect to certain ones of said network locations;

code for forming a list of network identifiers bookmarked by individual ones of said subscribers; and

code for ordering said network identifiers in said list according to a frequency of bookmarking by said subscribers.

38. A computer readable medium according to claim 37 further comprising:

code for monitoring accesses by individual ones of said subscribers to said network identifiers within said list to modify said frequency; and  
code for re-ordering said list according to said modified frequency.

39. A computer readable medium, having a program recorded thereon, where the program is configured to make a computer execute a procedure to facilitate access to multimedia content distributed over a computer network, said program comprising, at a server within said network:

code for interfacing an application by which at least one subscribing user thereof is enabled to access said multimedia content, each item of said multimedia content being identified by a network identifier;

code for monitoring individual said subscribing users' intent to use or store items of said multimedia content; and

code for, in response to said monitoring, forming a ranked list of network identifiers relating to said items for use in facilitating access to said multimedia content for a predetermined set of said subscribing users, wherein an ordering of said list is determined by a frequency that the corresponding said network identifier is referenced with intent to use or store by said subscribing users.

40. A computer readable medium according to claim 39 wherein said predetermined set of said subscribing user comprises all said subscribing users.

41. A computer readable medium according to claim 40 wherein said network identifier comprises one of a uniform resource identifier, a uniform resource location.

42. A computer readable medium according to claim 39 wherein each said item is one of identified directly by said network identifier or each said item is referenced indirectly by said network identifier.

43. A computer readable medium according to claim 39 further comprising:  
code for receiving a search request from one said application;  
code for identifying search criteria from said search request;  
5 code for applying said search criteria to metadata associated with network  
identifiers forming at least part of said ranked list; and  
code for transmitting search results to said application according to a  
correspondence of said results to the ranking of said list.

10 44. A computer readable medium according to claim 43 wherein said code for  
applying and transmitting comprise at least one of:

- (1) code for applying said search criteria to said network identifiers in said list  
and transmitting said search results according to said ranking;
- (2) code for selecting a plurality of highest ranked locations of said list and  
15 applying said search criteria to said plurality; and
- (3) code for randomly mutating the ranked locations with locations lower in  
the rank list and applying the search criteria to the mutated locations.

45. A computer readable medium according to claim 39 wherein said application is  
20 provided to a user terminal by said server to thereby provide said interface.

46. A server computer system for facilitating access to multimedia content distributed  
over a computer network, said system comprising:

means for monitoring location recording activities of subscribers of said server to  
25 form a ranked list of multimedia locations recorded by said subscribers;

means for receiving search criteria relating to said multimedia content entered by  
a subscriber; and

means for applying said search criteria to said ranked list to provide said  
subscriber with network identifiers for said multimedia content corresponding to those  
30 said recorded locations best satisfying said search criteria.



47. A server computer for forming a searchable list of computer network locations, said server computer comprising:

means for monitoring, at a server to a plurality of network subscribers, bookmarking activities of said subscribers with respect to certain ones of said network locations;

means for forming a list of network identifiers bookmarked by individual ones of said subscribers; and

means for ordering said network identifiers in said list according to a frequency of bookmarking by said subscribers.

48. A server computer for facilitating access to multimedia content distributed over a computer network, said computer comprising:

means for interfacing an application by which at least one subscribing user thereof is enabled to access said multimedia content, each item of said multimedia content being identified by a network identifier;

means for monitoring individual said subscribing users' intent to use or store items of said multimedia content; and

means for in response to said monitoring, forming a ranked list of network identifiers relating to said items for use in facilitating access to said multimedia content for a predetermined set of said subscribing users, wherein an ordering of said list is determined by a frequency that the corresponding said network identifier is referenced with intent to use or store by said subscribing users.

49. A browser application for operation upon a subscriber terminal, said application comprising means for signalling, to a server to which said application couples, a bookmarking of a location accessed by said application, said location being within a computer network incorporating said server.

50. A server operating within a computer network, said server having at least one user browser application associated therewith and via which said user browser application accesses locations within said network, said server comprising:

means for receiving from said user browser application, bookmark information relating to a location recorded for subsequent access by said user browser application;

means for integrating said bookmark information received from plural ones of said user browser applications to form a database of said bookmark information.

5

51. A server according to claim 50 further comprising:  
search engine means for searching said bookmark information.

52. A server according to claim 50 wherein said bookmark information comprises a  
10 location within said network of an source of multimedia content.

53. A server according to claim 52 wherein said bookmark information further comprises a count of a number of accesses to said location.

54. A method of facilitating access to multimedia content distributed over a computer network, said method comprising the steps of:

at a server within said network, monitoring network location recording activities of subscribers of said server to form a ranked list of network identifiers recorded by said subscribers, said network identifiers being a source of multimedia content;

20 receiving search criteria relating to said multimedia content entered by a subscriber,

using said ranked list to determine a subset thereof;

applying said received search criteria to said determined subset; and

25 providing, to said subscriber of said server, results of applying said criteria to said determined subset, said results being provided according to an ordering of the corresponding originating network identifier in said list.

55. A method according to claim 54 wherein said network identifiers in said ranked list identify the location of descriptions of multimedia content.

30

56. A method according to claim 55 wherein said descriptions of multimedia content identify the network location of the corresponding multimedia content.